



Volume 2, Issue 12

Ouranophantor

December 2019

A Newsletter of St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church



St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church

733 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60607

www.stbasilchicago.org



Church Office: info@stbasilchicago.org

Rev. Fr. Dimitri Tobias, *Proistamenos*

Telephone: 312-243-3738

Phone: 847-558-9849

Office Fax: 312-243-7961

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Parish Council President:

Jayme Schenk

Worship Hours

Sundays: Orthros 8:15 a.m. followed by Divine Liturgy

Weekdays: Divine Liturgy 6:30 a.m.

Esperinos: For Major Feasts 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday: Paraklesis Service 6:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events

December 8, 2019

+ St. John the Almsgiver — Survival Pack assembly, immediately following Divine Liturgy at St. Basil's Philoptochos Hall

December 15, 2019

+ Sunday School Christmas Pageant, immediately following Divine Liturgy

December 22, 2019

+ St. John the Almsgiver — Blanket making, immediately following Divine Liturgy at St. Basil's Philoptochos Hall

We welcome new families to our parish.

Now is the time to reach out to your loved ones who have fallen away for whatever reason and bring them back to church. Now is the time to share your faith with others. Together we must grow. Together we must build the Body of Christ. Invite someone to a service or to a church event. We have one of the friendliest communities in the Archdiocese.

Let us go out so that they will know we are Christians by our love.

Follow on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Basil-Greek-Orthodox-Church-476775679041438/>

Sacraments and Blessings

40-Day Blessings:

November 3, 2019

Leo

Son of

Christina & Justine Kawa

Baptisms:



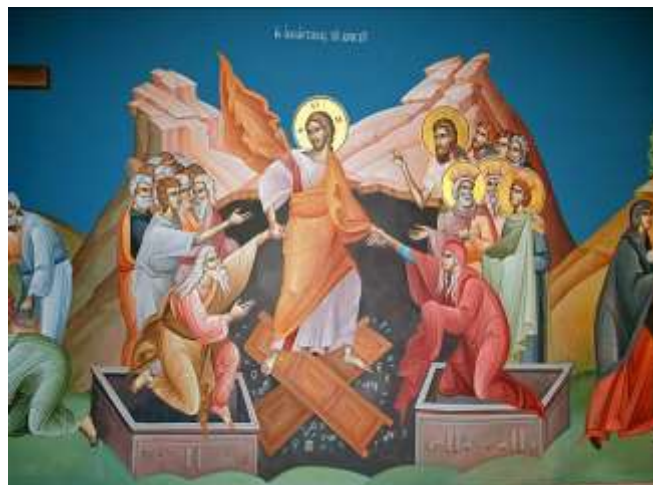
Chrismations:



Weddings:



Funerals:



Father Dimitri's Message



My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we gather together for the holidays, we know the reason for the season. It is not something new. It is not something that needs to be stated every year as though we somehow forgot. We choose to ignore it. We choose to focus on ourselves and our personal desires.

As a result, we see depression, sadness, and expectations that never seem to match up with reality. We decorate our homes and fill our time with parties, but none of these things ever fill the void.

I use the term “things” purposefully because we are not going to find joy in any “thing.” We won’t find joy in any “idea” either. The only real and lasting joy is to be found in Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). He is the answer to every question, and every hole in our life is filled by the Holy Spirit. To truly understand this season we must acquire the Holy Spirit.

If we were filled with the Holy Spirit we would weep with such unspeakable joy at the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We would not think of ourselves, but would be like the shepherds seeking to tell everyone the Good News. We would not worry about presents for ourselves, but would be seeking to offer to God gold (kingly praise), frankincense (godly worship), and myrrh (useful works). If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, instead of making dynamic plans, we would always say, “I make plans, but in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”

How else can we explain that churches are empty on Christmas? How else can we explain the destruction of Christmas year after year? How else can we explain that children do not know the story of the birth of Jesus Christ? We have been long been presented with the truth and we know what is right. Yet, we simply cannot seem to realign ourselves.

That is because we cannot change by willpower alone. We cannot seek to only be superficially “good people.” We can only change with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I would like to share an excerpt from St. Seraphim of Sarov, *On the Acquisition of the Holy Spirit*. In this work, which I urge all Christians to read and internalize, he shows us that the acquisition of the Holy Spirit is the most important spiritual goal for us all. It is the beginning, the middle, and the end of our spiritual journey, and it is the source of every fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

"Acquire the grace of the Holy Spirit also by practicing all the other virtues for Christ's sake. Trade spiritually with them; trade with those which give you the greatest profit. Accumulate capital from the superabundance of God's grace, deposit it in God's eternal bank which will bring you immaterial interest, not four or six percent, but one hundred percent for one spiritual ruble, and even infinitely more than that. For example, if prayer and watching gives you more of God's grace, watch and pray; if fasting gives you much of the spirit of God, fast; if almsgiving gives you more, give alms. Weigh every virtue done for Christ's sake in this manner.

"That's it, my son. That is how you must spiritually trade in virtue. Distribute the Holy Spirit's gifts of grace to those in need of them, just as a lighted candle burning with earthly fire shines itself and lights other candles for the illumining of all in other places, without diminishing its own light. If it is so, with regard to the earthly fire, what shall we say about the fire of the grace of the All-Holy Spirit of God? For earthly riches decrease with distribution, but the more the heavenly riches of God's grace are distributed, the more they increase in the one who distributes them. Thus the Lord Himself was pleased to say to the Samaritan woman: All who drink this water will be thirsty again. "But whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never be thirsty any more; but the water that I shall give him will be in him a spring of water leaping up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

This turns the logic of the world on its head. Instead of gaining and hoarding to acquire treasure, we ought to give. The recompense of this is always infinitely higher than we give. That is how the Infinite Grace of God pours out over us. The treasure of the Holy Spirit, in addition to providing riches that can never be taken away, also makes us into people so full of light and fire that we enrich those around us. We become beacons and we inspire others to seek that light themselves.

If we can change with His help, then the reason for the season becomes self evident. I pray that we can all acquire such a spirit. I pray we can all give so much more than Christmas gifts to our loved ones this season. I pray we can gain, instead of an iPad or laptop, kindness or gentleness.

I wish you all, my spiritual family in Christ, a very Merry Christmas (Christ's Mass, a.k.a The Divine Liturgy of the Incarnation our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ) and a Happy New Year. The greatest gift I have been given is the honor and privilege to be your priest.

I remain your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Dimitri", with a horizontal line underneath.

Fr. Dimitri Tobias, Proistamenos

Parish Council Update

By Themistocles Frangos

Dear St. Basil Parishioners and Friends,

The holidays are quickly approaching and we have much to be thankful for here at St. Basil. On Saturday, November 9, St. Basil held a "Sip and Paint" fundraising event at the church. Thank you to all those who attended and supported the event. It was a night of fellowship and fun. Special thanks to Venus Campanelli for chairing the event.

November was stewardship month at St. Basil, and each Sunday we heard parishioner testimonials about their experiences at St. Basil and what the church means to them. Each person mentioned that it was the parishioners that made St. Basil what it is today with strong fellowship making it a warm place to come and worship. Thank you to everyone who gives their time, talent, and treasure to make St. Basil home and to allow the church to carry out good works through each ministry program. Stewardship month was highlighted by Stewardship Sunday on November 17, when Maria-Kanella and the stewardship team kicked off the 2020 stewardship campaign. 2019 was the best year for stewardship at St. Basil and we look to continue the strong growth. The stewardship team has challenged us to have 125 stewards signed up by March 1, 2020. Stewardship forms will be mailed out, can be picked up at the church office, or completed online at www.stbasilchicago.org. There is still time to complete 2019 stewardship pledges.

The fall General Assembly was held on Sunday, November 10, after Divine Liturgy. The 2020 budget was presented and adopted by the assembly along with reports given by each ministry. Also, the parish council nominating committee was selected that day for the parish council elections to be held on Sunday, December 15. It's important that all parishioners are in church that Sunday to vote for the nine new members to be elected for the parish council. Those interested in running for the parish council need to contact Vicky Crosby at the church office and complete the form to have their name submitted to the nominating committee.

The Prison Ministry's Angel Tree program will be in high gear during December. We encourage parishioners to participate by buying Christmas gifts for children of inmates whose families live in the area surrounding our church. This program has become a holiday tradition at St. Basil.

Finally, as we turn the calendar to the new year, the church will be celebrating its feast day on January 1, 2020, with Hierarchical Vespers on December 31. This is an important time for the church because his Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael and many clergy and people from throughout the Metropolis will be attending St. Basil. There is much work to be done and Gus Drugas is chairing the feast day celebrations. Please contact Gus if you are able to attend and help.

From everyone at St. Basil, have a blessed Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year 2020!

Sincerely,
Themistocles Frangos
Parish Council Secretary



Stewardship Update

By Maria-Kanella Koper



The Stewardship Ministry lovingly reminds all stewards that it is not too late to pledge for 2019. You can sign up at <http://www.stbasilchicago.org/our-parish/stewardship/> or pick up a pamphlet at the pangari.

2019 Snapshot (*As of November 25, 2019*)

<u>Stewards</u>	<u>Pledged</u>	<u>Collected</u>
175	\$221,431	\$201,297

Registration for 2020 has begun. Stewardship packets were sent out in the mail. If you did not receive your packet, please reach out to the church office. We are looking forward to an exciting and prosperous 2020.

Would you like to be a guest writer for the stewardship section of the monthly newsletter? We'd love to hear why you love Saint Basil's church and our faith. Please contact Maria-Kanella if you're interested at mariakkoper@gmail.com.

Saint Basil Stewardship Ministry wants to hear from you. Have any questions, comments, ideas, or feedback? Let us know how we're doing so that we can better serve our church.

Have you become a steward of St. Basil's? Visit our website at www.stbasilchicago.org and click on "Stewardship" to learn more, or contact the church office at 312-243-3738 for additional information.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:21)

Philoptochos Update

By Nichole Kourvas Drimonas

Greetings to all,

On Saturday, November 16, St. Basil Philoptochos attended the Biennial Children's Medical Fund Luncheon along with other members from chapters around the Metropolis. Nearly \$300,000 was raised and distributed to 17 worthy grant recipients. We thank everyone who helped us raise funds for this wonderful event.

At Philoptochos, our primary goal is to help those in need. Throughout the year we do so by planning food drives, coat drives, preparing sack lunches, hosting our Dress a Girl Sew-a-Thon, fundraising, donating blankets, feeding the homeless, and so on. This is not just YiaYia's Philoptochos. We encourage ladies of all ages to attend meetings and participate in this wonderful group. As a third generation St. Basil Philoptochos member, I can personally say how rewarding and fulfilling it is to participate. We are always open to new ideas, and new members are always welcome. Please join us!

For more information, including meeting times, schedules, and upcoming events please contact me via email at nkourvas@gmail.com or call/text 708-945-4792.

Season's blessings to all.

Nichole Kourvas Drimonas,
President, St. Basil Philoptochos

Welcome Ministry

By Melita Green

The Welcome Ministry wishes the parishioners and guests to St. Basil a Blessed Christmas. We are grateful for the blessings God has bestowed upon our community in 2019. It has been a pleasure to welcome everyone who enters the church doors with a warm smile, handshake, or hug. Our community is described as friendly and inclusive as we express Christian hospitality to all. Two converts to Orthodoxy this year said that welcoming was a significant factor in their decision to convert. Our mission is to bring guests to Christ and the truth of Orthodoxy.

We welcome two new members to our team: Leia Asimacopoulos and Corey Kennelly. Thank you for serving St. Basil.





Choir Federation CD Recording Order Form

Hierarchical Liturgy – St. Basil Church in Chicago, IL

Sunday, October 6, 2019

A professional recording was created of the October 6th Liturgy to allow you to have a keepsake of this beautiful church service with the voices of the Chicago Metropolitan Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians at their 62nd Annual Conference. You may wish to gift a copy of this liturgy to a shut-in, a friend or relative. It will make a great gift to send to a loved one, and we will make every effort to mail your CD by Christmas.

Each CD is just \$15 postage paid if mailed to any address in the U.S.A. Complete the order form below and include your payment. Make your check or money order payable to: **FGOCM** (Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians).

Mail all orders to: Nick Paloumpis
925 Cherry Lane
Lombard, IL 60148

If you have any questions, please contact Nick at: holyapostleschoir@yahoo.com

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ORDER FORM:

Please send _____ CD recordings of the Divine Liturgy – Sunday, October 6, 2019.

Enclosed is \$_____ (\$15 per CD) postage included if mailed in the United States.

Mail to: _____
(Please print)

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

If you are ordering additional CDs to be mailed to a second location, please include that information on the back of this form. Thank you.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Payment: Cash/Ck#: _____

Order received on: _____

Mailed on: _____

Dress a Girl Ministry

By Mary Peroulas

We pinned, we sewed, we embellished, we ironed, we made bracelets, we reminisced, we saw old friends, we made new friends, we talked and laughed. We did all of that and so much more when our Philoptochos hosted the 7th annual Metropolis Dress a Girl Around the World Sew-a-Thon. Most importantly, we pray we make a difference in the lives of boys and girls around the world. A new dress, bracelet, or pair of pants can let children in need know they are loved, valued, and respected. Special thanks to the leaders of this worthwhile ministry, Dorothy Bezemes and Helene Frankos. And, of course, we are forever grateful to our dear Philoptochos sisters from the many parishes listed below who helped make this event a success: Ascension of Our Lord, Annunciation Cathedral, Assumption, St. Andrew, Sts. Constantine and Helen, St. Demetrios Chicago, St. Nicholas, St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church and Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church.

“No one can do everything but everyone can do something.”

God has blessed us in so many ways and we give thanks that we can give back to others. We look forward to having you join us at our 8th Metropolis Dress a Girl Around the World Sew-a-Thon in the fall of 2020.



Dress-a-Girl Around the World — November 2, 2019



St. Basil Prison Ministry

By Pat Cole

St. Basil Church Prison Ministry

2019 Angel Tree Christmas Program

Reaching out to Families with Incarcerated Loved Ones



2018 Delivery Team

Thank You St. Basil Church

Ways You Can Help

- Make calls from home to Angel Tree families, to determine best gifts for the children, **November 1-20**
- On **November 24, December 1, and December 8** select from the "Angel Tree" names of children to provide gifts for
- Bring in and sort wrapped gifts, **December 8 and 15**
- Deliver gifts to families, Saturday, **December 21, 8:30 – 11:00 am**
- Make a contribution to the ministry

St. John the Almsgiver Ministry

By Marina Arvanitis

Over the last year, our ministry has packed over 120 Almsgiver (survival) packs for our homeless brothers and sisters. These packs include necessities such as basic clothing and hygiene items, small snacks, and gift cards for Jewel-Osco or CTA fare. Winter will be an especially busy time for our ministry as we work to prepare more packs, collect clothing, and assemble blankets for those in need. You can join the efforts in one of the following ways:

1. Donate

We are currently accepting the following donations:

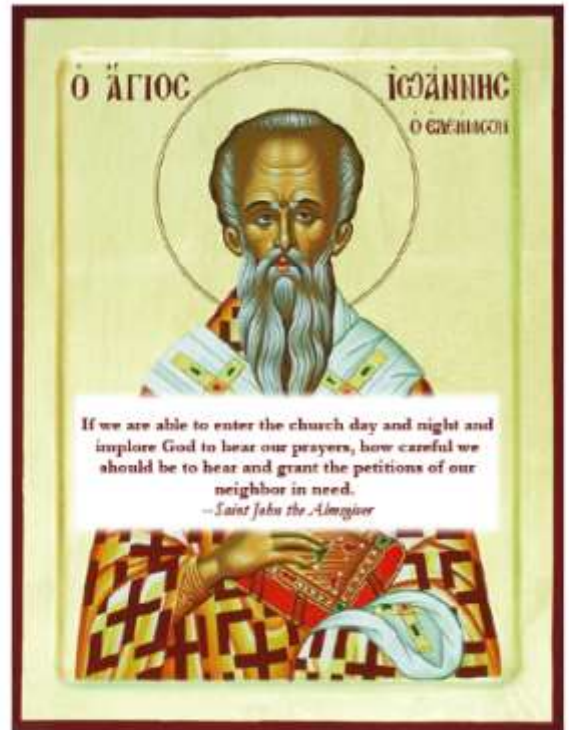
- New (or gently used) hats, gloves, and scarves — unisex or men's only.
- Monetary donations to purchase items for Almsgiver packs (e.g., socks, undershirts, combs, etc.). All donations are appreciated and no amount is too small.
- Please bring all donations to Vicky Crosby in the parish office.

2. Pack new Almsgiver packs

Our next packing session is planned for Sunday, December 8, during coffee hour. Please plan to help.

3. Help assemble no-sew fleece blankets

Throughout the winter months, our ministry will be assembling fleece blankets for adults and children who come to our parish's door in need of warm items. There is no sewing involved, and parishioners of all ages can help. Blanket assembly will take place during coffee hour. Please check the parish bulletin for dates beginning in December.



St. Tryphon Garden Ministry

By Marina Arvanitis



This November, the ministry added 18 cubic feet of organic compost and just over 1 cubic yard of organic mulch to the parish gardens, which we hope will result in a more fruitful garden next year. We will be decorating for Christmas soon, with greenery and wreaths around the outside of the church. In the spring and summer of 2020 we will be in desperate need of new volunteers, especially for weekly watering and weeding duties. If you are interested in becoming involved in this fun and useful ministry, please see Marina Arvanitis for more information.

Sunday School

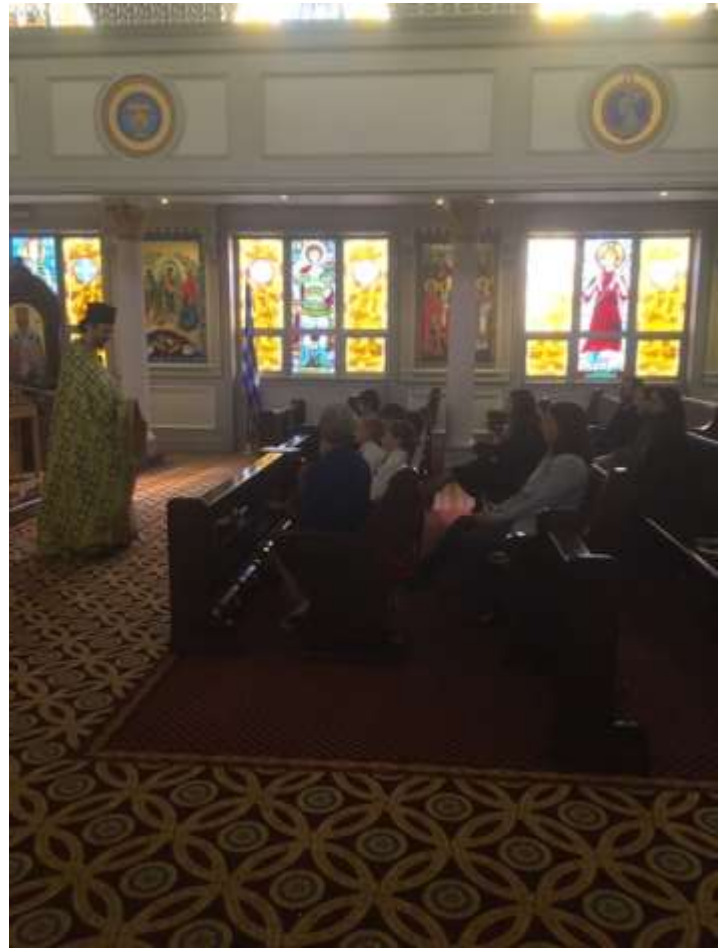
By Jennifer Georgopoulos

It's with great enthusiasm that we welcome back our K-1st grade teacher, Ms. Stella Antonoglu. Stella spent several months in Greece and we are so happy for her return.

Our Sunday School students have been busy practicing for the annual St. Basil Christmas Pageant, which will take place on December 15, 2019. Parents, if your child is registered for Sunday School please be sure that he or she is attending class. We need the students to attend regularly so they are clear on their pageant roles and the hymn. Students will be singing "The Apolytikion of the Nativity."

Father Dimitri recently met with our K-1st grade students to discuss the vestments that he wears during Divine Liturgy. The students were able to ask questions and observe up-close the vestments that Father wears each Sunday. Students have also prepared an art project sharing what they are thankful for during this time of Thanksgiving. Grades 4th-7th recently discussed the Beatitudes and how to practice and apply the teachings in their daily lives.

Thank you so much to the parents who took the time to take the Sunday School survey. I also want to thank our Sunday school students and teachers for their continued hard work and dedication. If you have any questions regarding the Sunday School program please contact Jennifer Georgopoulos at jenspalla75@sbcglobal



Girls Ministry

By Presbytera Mary Tobias

The Girls Ministry sold homemade cookies for Wounded Warriors Project on Sunday, November 10, 2019.
Thank you to all the young ladies who helped.



Presbytera Mary and the girls (along with some of the boys) made cards with inspirational messages to accompany the dresses made at the annual Dress a Girl Around the World Sew-a-Thon.



Coffee Hour Ministry

The Coffee Hour Ministry at St. Basil allows parishioners the opportunity to host coffee hour twice a month. It's a great way to get involved and promote fellowship at St. Basil while getting to know one another better.

Coffee Hour Ministry 2020: We and are looking for volunteers to either host a coffee hour or participate in one of our pot luck luncheons with a team of other parishioners for 2020. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the church office at 312-243-3738.

We thank everyone who has volunteered to host a coffee hour in 2019.



Sunday, December 1	Coffee Hour Ministry: Hosted by Coffee Hour Ministry
Sunday, December 8	Coffee Hour: Philoptochos
Sunday, December 15	Coffee Hour Ministry: Hosted by Parish Council
Sunday, December 22	Coffee Hour: Philoptochos
Sunday, December 29	Coffee Hour: Philoptochos

Recycling Initiative

By Edie Tikoff

Every Sunday after Divine Liturgy our parishioners come downstairs to Philoptochos Hall for coffee hour and fellowship. We would like to let you know some of the initiatives that we are taking with respect to recycling and the use of biodegradable materials to help our environment.

These initiatives are in line with Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople's September 2019 encyclical on the environment, in which he noted that "It is extremely vital that our archdioceses and metropolises as well as are parishes and sacred monasteries, foster initiatives and activities for the protection of our environment..."

- + **Biodegradable Materials** — One of our parishioners has generously donated paper plates, cups, and flatware. These items easily disintegrate and minimize negative impacts to the environment that plastic and other materials cause.
- + **Recycling Bins** — There are blue recycling bins in the Philoptochos Hall that we all should use when we clean up after coffee hour. The recycling bins have instructions and a list of all acceptable recyclable items that can be disposed of in the recycle bins.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- + **Make a donations for biodegradable materials** — Either monetary or actual materials. Please make donations in church office.
- + **Recycle after coffee hour** — Please make an effort to separate your trash and make good use of the recycling bins.

Yiayia's Kouzina Update

By Cynthia Schroeder

Yiayia's Kouzina has completed all baking for Christmas.

- + Packaging will occur on Saturday, December 14, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.
- + Orders can be picked up on Sunday, December 15, in Philoptochos Hall.

If there any questions, please contact me at 708-769-4084.

Thank You,
Cindy



Christmas Liturgical Schedule



Sunday, December 15

Metropolis of Chicago Open House

at Hellenic Museum of Chicago

Open House 3:00 pm–7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 24

Royal Hours of Christmas

Hours 8:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve

Vespers Liturgy 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Performance by St. Basil Choir



Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day

Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!



Tuesday, December 31

Our Festal and Patronal Vespers

Hierarchical Great Vespers 7:00 p.m.

Philoptochos Vasilopita Celebration to follow



Wednesday, January 1

*Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior and St. Basil the Great
Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, the Heaven Revealer*

Orthros 8:00 a.m.

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 9:45 am

Festal Luncheon to follow

Friday, January 3

Royal Hours of Theophany

Hours 8:30 a.m.



Sunday, January 5

Eve of Theophany

Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.



Monday, January 6

Theophany

Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.



Sunday, January 12

Blessing of the Chicago River

River Blessing 12 :00 p.m.

Festal Liturgies

December 4 - SS. Barbara and John of Damascus

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

December 5 - St. Savas the Sanctified

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

Hier. G. Ves. of St. Nicholas (Oak Lawn)

December 6 - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

Hier. Or. & Lit. for St. Nicholas (Oak Lawn)

December 11

Hier. G. Ves. for St. Spyridon (Palos Heights)

December 12 - St. Spyridon the Wonderworker

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

Hier. Or. & Lit. for St. Spyridon (Palos Heights)

December 17 - St. Dionysios of Zakynthos

Lit. at Elmhurst

December 20 - St. Ignatios the Godbearer

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

December 21 - St. Elthimios

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

December 27 - St. Stephen the Protomartyr

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

January 6

Hier. G. Ves. for the Forerunner (Des Plaines)

January 7 - Synaxis of the Forerunner

Early Lit. at St. Basil 6:30 a.m.

METROPOILIS VESPERS - 7:00 p.m.

SISTER PARISH FEASTS - Check Parish

DONATIONS Needed for Christmas and St. Basil Feast Day

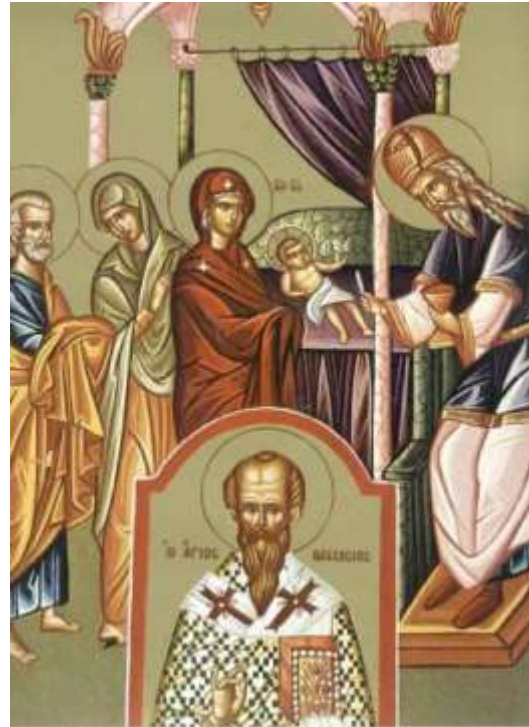
Holidays:

Bottles or Cases of Nama Wine
Incense for Christmas and Feast Day - \$250
Poinsettias 15 (30 needed)
Flowers for Icon of Christmas – \$150



Liturgical:

Beeswax Candles for Priestly Procession – \$75
Bishop's Candles – \$50



Feast Day:

Flowers for Icons of St. Basil – \$150 (2 Needed)
Flowers for Processional Icon – \$150
Flowers for Reliquary of St. Basil – \$150
Flowers for Iconostasis Icon of St. Basil – \$500
Frame for Iconostasis Icon of St. Basil – \$500 (one-time purchase)
Hospitality (Food) for Festal Vespers – \$300
Hospitality (Food) for Festal Luncheon \$500

Note: Please specify exact item with your donation. THANK YOU for your love & support! Βοήθειά σας!

**Please complete the information below and return entire form to the St. Basil Church office;
along with your payment.**

Kindly make checks payable to St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church.

(Please print)

Item _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____

Donation Amount: \$ _____ Check ____ Cash ____ Credit Card ____

St. Basil Philoptochos and parish family attend the Children's Medical Fund Banquet



Philoptochos continued our support of Lincoln Park Community Services (LPCS) by making sack lunches for its residents. LPCS provides interim housing for homeless men and women while helping them overcome issues that caused their homelessness by providing addiction counseling, job training and placement, mental health counseling, and more. Graduates of the program are able to permanently move into their own apartment.



Sip & Paint Event — November 9, 2019



Upcoming Church Events



Do you work in the city of Chicago?
Would you like to attend Weekday Liturgies but cannot because of Work? Join us at St. Basil.

December

- 2: St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia
- 4: Ss. Barbara the Great Martyr & St. John of Damascus
- 5: St. Savas the Sanctified
- 9: Conception of the Theotokos
- 15: St. Eleftherios the Hieromartyr
- 20: St. Ignatios the God-bearer
- 21: St Efthimios
- 27: St. Stephen the Protomartyr

Patronal feasts for the Chicago parishes will not be celebrated at St. Basil.
Please check the [St. Basil website calendar](#) for updates to above schedule. Liturgies are livestreamed on the [St. Basil Facebook Page](#)



At St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church
733 S. Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL

Weekly Meetings

Wednesdays

6:00 p.m. Paraklesis Service

6:45 p.m. Discussion

Quarterly Pot Luck for Students

Questions? Email us at
info@stbasilchicago.org

ADULT EDUCATION AT ST. BASIL

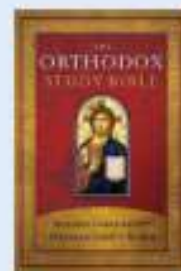
FALL 2019

September 10–December 17

Weekly on Tuesdays

10:00 a.m. Bible Study

Located in the church hall and also online via Zoom Meetings. Link available in Bible Study page of website (www.stbasilchicago.org/biblestudy). This semester, in preparation for our pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, we will study the Gospel according to St. John.



7:00 p.m. Online Book Study—Blessed Darkness

Classes will be available online via Zoom Meetings. Link available in the Blessed Darkness page of website (www.stbasilchicago.org/blesseddarkness). This semester we will study— *Our Thoughts Determine our Lives* by Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica.



December 4—St. Barbara & St. John of Damascus



Saint Barbara was from Heliopolis of Phoenicia and lived during the reign of Maximian.

She was the daughter of a certain idolater named Dioscorus. When Barbara came of age, she was enlightened in her pure heart and secretly believed in the Holy Trinity. About this time Dioscorus began building a bath-house; before it was finished he was required to go away to attend to certain matters, and in his absence Barbara directed the workmen to build a third window in addition to the two her Father had commanded. She also inscribed the sign of the Cross with her finger upon the marble of the bath-house, leaving the saving sign cut as deeply into the marble as if it had been done with an iron too. (When the Synaxarion of Saint Barbara was written, the marble of the bath-house and the cross inscribed by Saint Barbara were still preserved, and many healings were worked there.) When Dioscorus returned, he asked why the third window had been added; Barbara began to declare to him the mystery of the Trinity. Because she refused to renounce her faith, Dioscorus tortured Barbara inhumanely, and after subjecting her to many sufferings he beheaded her with his own hands, in the year 290.

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Let us honor the holy Barbara for, with the aid of the Cross as her weapon, she crushed the snares of the enemy, and was rescued from them like a bird.



Saint John was born in Damascus about the year 675, the son of wealthy and pious parents, of the family of Mansur. He was reared together with Saint Cosmas (see Oct. 14), who had been adopted by John's father Sergius, a man of high rank in the service of the Caliph of Damascus. Both of these young men were instructed by a certain monk, also named Cosmas, who had been taken captive in Italy by the Arabs and later ransomed by John's Father. Saint John became a great philosopher and enlightener of the age in which he lived, and was honoured by the Caliph with the dignity of counsellor.

When Emperor Leo the Isaurian (reigned 717-741) began his war on the holy icons, John wrote epistles defending their veneration. Since the Saint, being under the Caliph of Damascus, was beyond Leo's power, the Iconoclast Emperor had a letter forged in John's handwriting which invited Leo to attack Damascus, saying the city guard was then weak; Leo then sent this letter to the Caliph, who in his fury punished John's supposed treason with the severing of his right hand. The Saint obtained the Caliph's Permission to have his severed hand again, and that night prayed fervently to the most holy Theotokos before her icon. She appeared to him in a dream and healed his hand, which, when he awoke, he found to be healed in truth. This Miracle convinced the Caliph of his innocence, and he restored John to his office as counsellor. The Saint, however, with many pleadings obtained his permission to withdraw from the world to become a monk. He

assumed the monastic habit in the Monastery of Saint Sabbas. Then he had as elder a very simple and austere monk who commanded him neither to write to anyone, nor to speak of the worldly knowledge he had acquired, and John faithfully obeyed. A

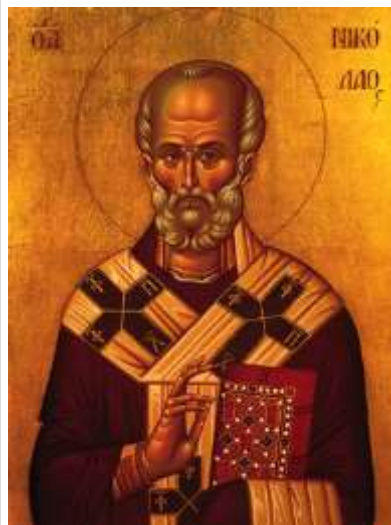
monk grieving over his brother's death, however, after insisting vehemently, prevailed upon John to write a funeral hymn to console him for his brother's death. When John's elder learned of his transgression of the rule he had given him, he cast him out of his cell, and would only accept him back after John had humbly, with much self-condemnation and without murmuring consented to clean all the latrines in the lavra. After his elder had received him back, our Lady appeared to the elder and sternly charged him not to hinder John any longer from his writings and composition of hymns.

In his writings he fought courageously against the Iconoclasts Leo the Isaurian and his son Constantine Copronymus. He was also the first to write a refutation of Islam. The time he had spent as a counsellor in the courts of the Moslems of Damascus had given him opportunity to learn their teachings at first hand, and he wrote against their errors with a sound understanding of their essence. Saint John was surnamed Chrysorroas ("Golden-stream") because of the eloquence of his rhetorical style and the great abundance of his writings; this name - Chrysorroas was also the name of the river that flows by Damascus. In his writings he set forth the Orthodox Faith with exactness and order. In his old age, after his foster-brother Cosmas had been made Bishop of Maiuma, John also was ordained presbyter by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Having lived eighty-four years, he reposed in peace in 760. In addition to his theological writings, he adorned the Church of Christ with metrical and prose hymns and composed many of the prosomia used as the models for the melodies of the Church's liturgical chant; he also composed many of the sacred hymns for the feasts of the Lord Saviour and the Theotokos. The life of Saint John of Damascus was written by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem. See also June 28.

Apolytikion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone

You are a guide of Orthodoxy, a teacher of piety and modesty, a luminary of the world, the God inspired pride of monastics. O wise John, you have enlightened everyone by your teachings. You are the harp of the Spirit. Intercede to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

December 6—St. Nicholas



This Saint lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330. As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ... was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travellers, and of sea-farers in particular; he is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

A model of faith and the image of gentleness, the example of your life has shown you forth to your sheepfold to be a master of temperance. You obtained thus through being lowly, gifts from on high, and riches through poverty. Nicholas, our father and priest of priests, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

December 8 and 9 — Conception of the Theotokos

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, since Saint Anna, the Ancestor of God, was barren, she and her husband Joachim remained without children until old age. Therefore, sorrowing over their childlessness, they besought God with a promise that, if He were to grant them the fruit of the womb, they would offer their offspring to Him as a gift. And God, hearkening to their supplication, informed them through an Angel concerning the birth of the Virgin. And thus, through God's promise, Anna conceived according to the laws of nature, and was deemed worthy to become the mother of the Mother of our Lord (see also Sept. 8).

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Against all hope, the bonds of barrenness are loosed today. For, God has hearkened unto Joachim and Anna clearly promising that they would bear a godly maiden. He who commanded the angel to cry out to her, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you," will be born of her, the infinite One Himself, becoming man.



December 12 —St. Spyridon



Spyridon, the God-bearing Father of the Church, the great defender of Corfu and the boast of all the Orthodox, had Cyprus as his homeland. He was simple in manner and humble of heart, and was a shepherd of sheep. When he was joined to a wife, he begat of her a daughter whom they named Irene. After his wife's departure from this life, he was appointed Bishop of Trimythos, and thus he became also a shepherd of rational sheep. When the First Ecumenical Council was assembled in Nicaea, he also was present, and by means of his most simple words stopped the mouths of the Arians who were wise in their own conceit. By the divine grace which dwelt in him, he wrought such great wonders that he received the surname "Wonderworker." So it is that, having tended his flock piously and in a manner pleasing to God, he reposed in the Lord about the year 350, leaving to his country his sacred relics as a consolation and source of healing for the faithful.

About the middle of the seventh century, because of the incursions made by the barbarians at that time, his sacred relics were taken to Constantinople, where they remained, being honoured by the emperors themselves. But before the fall of Constantinople, which took place on May 29, 1453, a certain priest named George Kalokhairites, the parish priest of the church where the Saint's sacred relics, as well as those of Saint Theodora the Empress, were kept took them away on account of the impending peril. Travelling by way of Serbia, he came as far as Arta in Epirus, a region in Western Greece opposite to the isle of Corfu. From there, while the misfortunes of the Christian people were increasing with every day, he passed over to Corfu about the year 1460. The relics of Saint Theodora were

given to the people of Corfu; but those of Saint Spyridon remain to this day, according to the rights of inheritance, the most precious treasure of the priest's own descendants, and they continue to be a staff for the faithful in Orthodoxy, and a supernatural wonder for those that behold him; for even after the passage of 1,500 years, they have remained incorrupt, and even the flexibility of his flesh has been preserved. Truly wondrous is God in His Saints! (Ps. 67:35)

Apolytikion in the First Tone

O Father, God-bearer, Spyridon, you were proven a champion and Wonder Worker of the First Ecumenical Council. You spoke to the girl in the grave and turned the serpent to gold. And, when chanting your prayers, most sacred One, angels ministered with you. Glory to Him who glorified you; glory to Him who crowned you; glory to Him who, through you, works healing for all.

December 17—Prophet Daniel & St. Dyonysios of Zakynthos

The Prophet Daniel and the Three Children were all descended from the royal tribe of Judah. In the year 599 before Christ, in the reign of Joachim, who was also called Jechonias (I Chron. 3:16, and II Chron. 36:8), while yet children, these righteous ones were led away as captives into Babylon together with the other Jews by Nabuchodonosor. He singled them out from among the other captives to serve him, and renamed them thus: Daniel was named Baltazar; Ananias, Sedrach; Misail, Misach; and Azarias, Abednago. They were reared in the royal court, and taught the wisdom of the Chaldeans; and after the passage of three years, they surpassed all the Chaldean sages (Dan. 1).

Thereafter, Daniel, being still a lad, interpreted that mysterious image seen by Nabuchodonosor in a dream, an image that was composed of different metals, but was shattered and ground to dust by a certain stone which had been hewn out of a mountain without the hand of man. This vision clearly portrayed through the mountain the height of the Virgin's holiness and the power of the Holy Spirit which overshadowed her. Through the image of the Stone, Christ was portrayed, Who was seedlessly born of her, and Who by His coming as the Godman would shatter and destroy all the kingdoms of the world, which were portrayed through the image; and He would raise them that believe in Him into His Heavenly Kingdom, which is eternal and everlasting (ibid. 2:31-45). Thereupon, he signified in prophecy the time of His appearance in the Jordan, the beginning of His preaching of the Gospel, the time of His saving Passion, and the cessation of the worship according to the Mosaic Law, (ibid. 9:14-27).



He portrayed most excellently the majestic and dread image of His second coming, presenting by means of words, as with living colours, the fiery throne which shall be set, the Eternal Judge Who shall sit thereon, the river of fire that shall flow forth before Him, the calling to account before the impartial judgment seat, the opened books of each ones deeds, the thousands upon thousands of them that minister to Him, and the ten thousands of them that stand in His presence (ibid. 7: 9-10). Daniel (whose name means "God is judge") was called "man of desires" by the Angels that appeared (ibid. 9:23), because he courageously disdained every desire of the body, even the very bread that is necessary for nourishment. Furthermore, he received this name because, in his longing for the freedom of those of his tribe, and his desire to know their future condition, he ceased not supplicating God, fasting and bending the knee three times a day. Because of this prayer he was cast into the den of lions, after he had been accused by his enemies as a transgressor of the decree issued through the proclamation of the king, that no one should worship or ask for anything from God or from men for thirty days, but only from the king. But having stopped the mouths of the lions by divine might, and appearing among them as though he were a shepherd of sheep, Daniel showed the impious the might of godliness (ibid. 6:1-23).



As for the Three Children, Ananias ("Yah is gracious"), Misail ("Who is what God is?"), and Azarias ("Yah is keeper"), since they refused to offer adoration to Nabuchodonosor's image, they were cast into the furnace of fire. They were preserved unharmed amidst the flames - even their hair was untouched - by the descent of the Angel of the Lord, that is, the Son of God. Walking about in the furnace, as though in the midst of dew, they sang the universal hymn of praise to God, which is found in the Seventh and Eighth Odes of the Holy Psalter. And coming forth therefrom, without even the smell of the fire on their clothes (Dan. 3), they prefigured in themselves the Virgin's incorrupt giving of birth; for she, on receiving the Fire of the Godhead within her womb, was not burned, but remained virgin, even as she was before giving birth. Therefore the Church celebrates the Three Children and Daniel on this day, on the Sunday of the Forefathers, and on the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, since they prefigured and proclaimed His Incarnation. Furthermore, they were of the tribe of Judah, wherefrom, Christ sprang forth according to the flesh. The holy Three Children completed their lives full of days; as for the Prophet Daniel, he lived until the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, whom he also

petitioned that his nation be allowed to return to Jerusalem and that the Temple be raised up again, and his request was granted. He reposed in Peace, having lived about eighty-eight years. His prophetic book, which is divided into twelve chapters, is ranked fourth among the greater Prophets.

Apolytikion in the Second Tone

Great are the accomplishments of faith. In the fountain of flame the three Holy Youths rejoiced as though they were resting by the waters. And the

Prophet Daniel showed himself to be a shepherd to the lions, as though they were sheep. Through their prayers O Christ our God, save our souls. The holy hierarch, Saint Dionysius, who was born and reared on Zakynthos, was the son of pious and wealthy parents, Mocius and Paulina by name. In his youth he entered the ancient monastery of the Strophada Islands, which lie south of Zakynthos, and there he donned the monastic habit. Later, he was appointed Archbishop of Aegina, and adorned its throne for a considerable time. Thereafter he returned to his homeland. One incident in his life especially reveals to what virtue he attained. A man came to him in desperation, witnessing that he had committed a murder, and was being pursued by the slain man's family. He asked Saint Dionysius to give him refuge. The Saint agreed to this, upon learning that it was his own brother whom the man had slain, he said nothing, but concealing the agony of his grief, hid him. When the Saint's kinsmen arrived at the monastery, he told them that the Murderer had gone by such and such a way. When they had departed, he admonished the man concerning the gravity of his sin, instructed him in repentance, and sent him off in peace having forgiven him his brother's murder. According to local tradition, this man later returned and became a monk at this same monastery. Saint Dionysius reposed in peace in 1621, leaving behind his sacred and incorrupt relics as a treasure for his fellow citizens.

Apolytikion in the First Tone

The faithful son of Zakynthos, Aegina's wise prelate, the protector of the august Monastery of Strophada, O wise Dionysius, with one voice, all we the faithful honour thee and cry: By thy prayers, save them that keep thy memorial and cry unto thee sincerely: Glory to Christ Who hath glorified thee. Glory to Him who hath made thee wondrous. Glory to Him Who made thee our unsleeping intercessor.

December 25 —Nativity of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors, and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born, and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).

Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby they that worshipped the stars were instructed by a star to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion in the Third Tone

Today, the Virgin bears Him who is transcendent, and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach. Angels, along with shepherds glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star. For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages.



Christmas Time ...

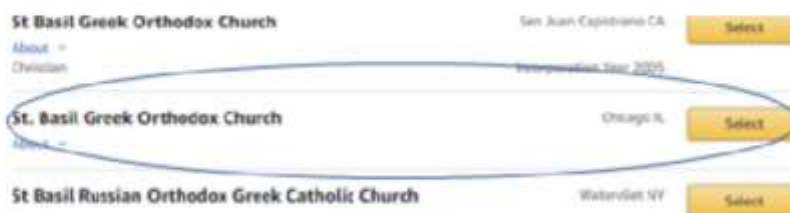
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Imagine if all the presents St. Basil parishioners bought on Amazon.com at Christmas time, and around the year for that matter, resulted in Amazon making a contribution to St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church.

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For more information call Vicky Crosby at the St. Basil office, 312 243 3738 or Steve Cole, 312 493 4063.

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St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church - December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 No class - Thanks-giving break Girls Ministry to Decorate Church (Hot Chocolate Party) 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy	2 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting	3 10:00 am Bible Study	4 6:30 am Divine Liturgy for St. Barbara and St. John of Damascus 6:00 pm Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Virgin Mary	5 6:30 am Divine Liturgy for St. Savas the Sanctified 7:00 pm Great Vespers of St. Nicholas	6 8:30 am Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St. Nicholas	7
8 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 12:30 pm + Baptism	9 6:30 am Divine Liturgy for the Conception of the Theotokos	10 10:00 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Online Class	11 6:00 pm Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Virgin Mary 7:00 pm Great Vespers of St. Spyridon	12 8:00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy for St. Spyridon at Palos Heights	13 Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri	14
15 8:15 am Nativity Pageant Orthros and Divine Liturgy	16 7:00 pm Great Vespers for St. Dionysios of Zakynthos at Holy Trinity, Chicago	17 10:00 am Bible Study 7:00 pm Online Class	18 6:00 pm Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Virgin Mary	19	20 6:30 am Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Divine Liturgy for St. Ignatios the Godbearer	21
22 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy	23	24 8:30 am Christmas Eve Royal Hours of Christmas 4:00 pm Vespers Liturgy of Christmas Eve	25 8:30 am Christmas Day Orthros & Divine Liturgy of the Nativity	26	27 6:30 am Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Divine Liturgy for St. Stephen the Protomartyr	28
29 8:15 am Girls Ministry to Bake Vasilopita Orthros and Divine Liturgy	30	31 7:00 pm New Year's Eve Hierarchical Great Vespers of the Circumcision and St. Basil the Great				

SAVE THE DATE

Feed My Starving Children.

**Join us for our 6th annual meal
packing event on Saturday, March
14 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at
the FMSC center in Schaumburg.**

More details coming next month.



St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church
733 South Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60607